



How does school-based OT/PT differ from community medical therapy?

A medical diagnosis or motor delay confirmed by evaluation results does not automatically indicate a need for school-based therapy. There must also be an adverse impact on the student's performance or access to his/her education. School-based OT and PT are not intended to replace community medical services, but are provided only when identified problem areas directly affect educational performance that indicates a child needs related service to benefit from special education. Many children can benefit from collaboration between school-based and community-based service providers.



Additional Information

State and Federal Regulations

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)

<http://idea.ed.gov>

Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)

www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/

Maryland State Department of Education

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org>

School-Based OT and PT

Occupational and Physical Therapy Early Intervention and School-Based Services in Maryland: A guide to practice:

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/5F4F5041-02EE-4F3A-B495-5E4B3C850D3E/19473/OT_PT_FullDocument_December11_Final.pdf



This is a working document of the Maryland State Steering Committee for OT/PT School-Based Programs (Practice Subcommittee) in collaboration with MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services. The Steering Committee provides a forum for OT/PT school-based and early intervention specialists and other stakeholders to meet and problem-solve regarding statewide issues in the assessment and implementation of OT/PT services in Maryland public schools and early intervention programs.

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OT



PT

School-Based Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy Ages 3-21

The Maryland State Steering Committee for OT/PT School-Based Programs

What is occupational therapy and physical therapy?

Occupational therapy (OT) is a profession built on the principle of affirming the importance of engaging in meaningful daily life activities or “occupations” and to support health and well-being.

Physical therapy (PT) is a profession built on the principle of preserving, developing, and promoting independent physical function.

All OTs, OT Assistants, PTs, and PT Assistants are licensed through the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

What are the roles of OTs and PTs in schools?

Both OT & PT are related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Related services are provided to help a child with an educational disability benefit from his/her special education program in the least restrictive learning environment.

OTs & PTs address performance skills where a child's disability impacts or compromises the ability to access, participate, and/or to make progress in his/her natural learning environment and in the general education environment.



How is the need for OT and PT services determined?

In order to receive school-based OT and/or PT services, students must be identified as having a disability that meets the criteria under the IDEA.

The school team, which includes the parents/caregiver, establishes the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The need for OT and/or PT services is not based on specific test scores or discrepancies, rather on whether the unique expertise of the therapist is required for the student's educational participation.

Some students, while not eligible for special education services, may qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The 504 Plan specifies the accommodations that are necessary for a student to access educational activities and may involve input from an OT or PT.

How are services delivered?

Services are provided to and on behalf of students. Strategies and interventions are embedded where possible into naturally occurring activities and routines within the educational program.



When are services discontinued?

Discontinuing services is warranted when the IEP or Section 504 team determines that the child no longer requires the unique expertise of the occupational therapist and/or physical therapist to achieve educational benefit. Factors in this decision include:

- Child has met the functional goals
- Deficits are no longer interfering with the child's ability to function within his/her educational program
- Strategies can be implemented by the current educational team
- Equipment and environmental modifications are in place and are effective
- Level of participation is within expectation for the child's educational program